

Aspen Riverpark Tenants Association

April 9, 2001

Jenny Torres
Property Manager
Aspen Riverpark Apartments
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Ms. Torres,

We are writing to summarize and confirm our understandings from the meeting which was held April 4 with yourself, and the representative from company which owns the building. Below is our brief summary:

- 1) Mice and rat infestation – This was a long discussion, as it is a serious issue. A rat has fallen from a bathroom ceiling. Rat and mice droppings have been seen on childrens beds daily. It was pointed out that this was having a health impact on the children (asthma). The representative from the ownership group explained that the building had just begun to receive 2 exterminations a month – one in apartments, one in common areas. Tenants suggested a number of possible steps:
 - a) poke poison into the walls
 - b) fill the holes which are leading into the building with cement
 - c) repair the door which has rotted on the bottom along Raymond Blvd.

The owner asked that tenants be patient to see if the twice monthly procedure was working. He also said the door could be repaired, and possibly the holes could be repaired on the Oxford St. side of the building. Tenants said that they have been home all day when the exterminator has not come. Manager said this would be checked out. Exterminating company is S&M, from Roselle. Manager said they would post extermination notices again. Manager also said they would explore the idea of having one extermination on the weekend, one during the week.

2. Maintenance personnel and upkeep issues – Tenants do not feel that maintenance staff is sufficient, or provided with enough clean supplies. You stated that one maintenance person is responsible for 2 sections of the building currently. In response to a question, you said there is no problem in hiring qualified tenants for maintenance work. Painting is to take place every 3 years.
3. Timely repairs – There were still complaints about how long it was taking to fix various things. A concrete example was given by myself of repairs to my door for which I brought my mother in to stay while I was at work. I called three times, and nothing happened. Work orders should be completed quickly, and should be

completed when they are scheduled to be done. This discussion was not completed.

Lack of heat was also an issue to the point where the building was fined for lack of heat. Some people had no heat in an entire month. Some run their ovens constantly. Some had heat when they called HUD. Boiler system is very complicated, manager said. Leaks in the system were being fixed. Thermostats were installed in some individual apartments. This raises problems because if that person does a lot of cooking, for example, it reads the temperature high, while other people will be freezing. Question: could thermostats be installed in public areas? Answer: They would be vandalized. Perhaps this needs to be revisited. In prior years, boiler problems were dealt with well in advance of the cold season.

Hot water system in building 50 was replaced. Should be no problem now.

4. Safety issues: the question of 10 Lexington St. having no second exit out of the building because of a locked door was raised. A suggestion was made to have the fire inspector return to check this.

Elevators: a mirror is supposed to be inside elevators. The current elevator contract is with Cesco. The city has to inspect the elevators twice a year. A suggestion was made by HUD Tenants Coalition representative about tenant elevator monitors was made., which might be less expensive. Owner said annual expense for elevators was \$80,000. The company is looking into "increasing the service contract." In particular buildings, elevators are being used for illegal activities.

Window guards are available from the office. Do people have to ask for them? Do they know they are available?

5. Transfer procedures – Due to Sylvia's departure, the procedures, waiting lists, etc. are totally mixed up. Ms. Torres will meet with each person on the list individually to try to prioritize the moves again. Some people are illegally subleasing their apartments to others.

6. Pay phone – Seniors need a way to call in an emergency. There is no one in the office at certain times, and no one in the security booth at certain times. Perhaps it could be installed inside their part of the complex. Manager will look into.

7. Security – The company is looking at its options here, since the building has now gone underneath NJHFMA, and there are different requirements. Tenants feel that security as it exists is not adequate. A 10 PM curfew was mentioned, as well as police on grounds, meeting with the police. Owner said a new system was going into place to make sure security guards are making the rounds. A remote key system is being installed for seniors. The owner said that this issue would be addressed by the next meeting at which manager and owner are invited.

8. Additional – Rose has a calendar on use of the community room. Call to request, and follow up with a letter. Manager should make person who uses the

room accountable by checking afterwards that the room is cleaned, and no chairs are missing.

Pets – the lease says no dogs. This policy should be enforced, with the exception of special circumstances (like the maintenance person with a dog). It should be enforced across the board, without favoritism.

We also discussed getting additional chairs for the community room, as it is difficult to have any meeting without sufficient chairs. The owner said he would look into it.

Please provide us with the owners name and address, so that we can address a copy of this letter to him.

We certainly appreciate the time you took to meet with us. We understand that you have inherited many problems. We are ready and willing to work with you. Feel free to contact me if you need our assistance.

Sincerely,

Judy Benders
Tenant President

c.c. Frank Hutchins, HUD Tenants Coalition